

REMARKS

The Office Action dated January 16, 2007 has been carefully considered. Claim 4 has been amended. The amendment is supported at page 3, lines 11-12.

Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Komatsu (U.S. Patent No. 3,892,058) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,139,898 to Meyer et al.

Amended claim 4 is directed to a process for preparing cooked rice in a package which comprises the sequential steps of coating the rice with emulsified oil solution, removing water from the long grain, filling a container with rice, sterilizing, cooking, sealing and packaging. In contrast, Komatsu teaches that the product will be cooked before sterilizing. (Komatsu, Col. 11, lines 7-11). The Examiner conceded that Komatsu teaches sterilization of the *final product* (Office Action at page 2, last paragraph). Meyer et al. also teaches that the sterilization (pasteurization) is the last step. Thus, taken in combination, the prior art teaches and motivates the ordinary skilled worker to first cook the product and subsequently to sterilize. The prior art teaches away from the claimed process. Thus, one of skill in the art would have had no motivation to modify the process of Komatsu in the manner of the claimed invention and would have had no expectation of success in achieving the high quality product obtained by the method of the present invention.

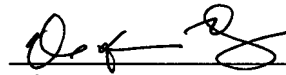
The present invention provides improving the fluffiness of cooked rice by preventing destruction of the starch cell membrane and pasting of starch by removing water before sterilization and removing microorganisms on the surface of the rice simultaneously with preventing destruction of the starch cell membrane of long grain by a series of sterilization for a short period under high temperature.

In contrast, in Meyer et al., the starch of rice is degenerated to give oxidized starch during the blanching step because of organic acid in the acidified water. Further, Applicants submit that the microorganisms on the surface of rice will not be completely extinct because sterilization is carried under low temperature of 80~100° C.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and request that all claims be allowed. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned should she believe that this would expedite prosecution of this application. It is believed that no fee is required. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-2165.

Respectfully submitted,

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